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Description

MULTIPLE-GATE DEVICE WITH FLOATING BACK GATE

BACKGROUND ART

[0001] Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention generally relates to transistors and more particularly to a multiple-gate transistor that has a logic gate on one side of a channel region, and a floating gate and programming gate on the other side of the channel region.

[0003] Description of the Related Art

[0004] The size of transistors is being continually reduced so as to increase speed and decrease the size of devices that utilize transistors. Scaling is a term that describes this continual reduction in the size of transistors. Scaling of complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) devices has pushed integrated circuits to the limits of power that can be supplied to the device. A significant aspect of this power crisis is due to subthreshold leakage in field effect transistors (FETs). Variations in threshold voltage (V_t) among FETs within a die severely limits the speed that can be manufactured. The present invention provides a means of adjusting the V_t of individual FETs in a die post manufacturing process and structure.

[0005] SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006]

The invention provides a multiple-gate transistor that includes a channel region and source and drain regions at ends of the channel region. A gate oxide is positioned between a logic gate and the channel region and a first insulator is formed between

a floating gate and the channel region. The first insulator is thicker than the gate oxide. The floating gate is electrically insulated from other structures. Also, a second insulator is positioned between a programming gate and the floating gate. Voltage in the logic gate causes the transistor to switch on and off, while voltage in the programming gate adjusts the threshold voltage of the transistor. The transistor can comprise a fin-type field effect transistor (FinFET), where the channel region comprises the middle portion of a fin structure and the source and drain regions comprise end portions of the fin structure.

[0007] These, and other, aspects and objects of the present invention will be better appreciated and understood when considered in conjunction with the following description and the accompanying drawings. It should be understood, however, that the following description, while indicating preferred embodiments of the present invention and numerous specific details thereof, is given by way of illustration and not of limitation. Many changes and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention without departing from the spirit thereof, and the invention includes all such modifications.

[0008] BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The invention will be better understood from the following detailed description with reference to the drawings, in which:

[0010] Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor; and

[0011] Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;

[0012] Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;

- [0013] Figure 4 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0014] Figure 5 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0015] Figure 6 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0016] Figure 7 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0017] Figure 8 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0018] Figure 9 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0019] Figure 10 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0020] Figure 11 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0021] Figure 12 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0022] Figure 13 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor;
- [0023] Figure 14 is a schematic diagram of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor; and
- [0024] Figure 15 is a top view of a cross-section of a partially completed transistor.

[0025] DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED

[0026] EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

- [0027] The present invention and the various features and advantageous details thereof are explained more fully with reference to the nonlimiting embodiments that are illustrated in the accompanying drawings and detailed in the following description. It should be noted that the features illustrated in the drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale. Descriptions of well-known components and processing techniques are omitted so as to not unnecessarily obscure the present invention. The examples used herein are intended merely to facilitate an understanding of ways in which the invention may be practiced and to further enable those of skill in the art to practice the invention. Accordingly, the examples should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention.
- [0028] In order to provide increased control over threshold voltage and thereby help solve the power crisis occurring in integrated circuits, the invention presents a double gate transistor, wherein a first gate is an ordinary gate with a thin oxide for logic or other circuit use, and a second gate comprises a stacked floating gate. After a diagnostic test, it is determined which devices have V_t too high (slow) or too low (leaky). The floating gates are then programmed according to need to provide a chip with higher performance and lower power. More specifically, by providing a high voltage to the programming gate, the charge in the floating gate can be changed through either tunneling of electrons from the drain to the floating gate, or, alternatively, if a high drain voltage is also provided, through injection of channel hot electrons at the drain edge. In other words, carriers flow to the floating gate through the insulator that separates the drain from the floating gate. Charge within the floating gate creates field lines that cross the channel region, which changes the threshold voltage of the transistor itself. Therefore, by altering the charge of the floating gate, the threshold voltage of the transistor can be increased or decreased. A wiring network as either

implanted lines in the substrate or buried interconnects in the BOX can be used as a programming grid for the floating gates.

- [0029] While one ordinarily skilled in the art would understand that the invention can be embodied within a number of different types of transistors, including fin-type field effect transistors (FinFETs), planar transistors, vertical transistors, etc., Figures 1-14 illustrates one example of the invention embodied in a FinFET transistor. More specifically, Figure 1 illustrates a substrate wafer 10, buried oxide (box) insulator structure 12, a silicon layer 14, an insulator (such as SiO₂, or Si₃N₄/SiO₂ stack etc.), and a mandrel 18. Many different processes can be used to form the structure shown in Figure 1, as would be understood by one ordinarily skilled in this art field, and a detailed discussion of the same is avoided for brevity.
- [0030] In Figure 2, the invention etches through the insulator 16 and silicon 14 stopping on the oxide layer 12 to create openings 22. This can comprise a single etching process or multiple etching processes. After these openings are created, an oxide 20 is grown on the sides of the exposed silicon 14 using, for example, any conventional oxide formation process, such as thermal oxidation. Next, in Figure 3, a conductor 30 (such as polysilicon or some other common conductor) is deposited and then selected removed in, for example, any common spacer formation technique. For example, when forming sidewall spacers, material is generally deposited and then removed in a directional etch (e.g., anisotropic etching) that removes material from horizontal surfaces at a faster rate than it removes the material from vertical surfaces, which leaves the material only on the sidewalls of the various structures. This forms conductive spacers 30 on the insulator 20, as shown in Figure 3. An additional etching process then removes portions of the buried oxide layer 12, stopping on the wafer material 10 as shown in Figure 4.
- [0031] In Figure 5, the invention again forms insulators 50 on the exposed area of the wafer and conductor 30. Once again, this insulator 50 can be any common insulator

(such as SiO₂, or Si₃N₄/SiO₂ stack etc.) and is grown using any of a number of techniques well-known to those ordinarily skilled in this art field. In Figure 6, another conductor 60 (polysilicon or any well-known conductor) is deposited. Then, the center portion 66 is removed in a selective etching process which extends through the insulator 50 down to the wafer 10.

- [0032] As shown in Figure 7, additional conductive material 70 is deposited over the previous conductor material 60 and in the opening 66. In Figure 8, an insulator 80 is formed, again using well-known processes. Then, in Figure 9, the mandrel material 18 is removed using a selective removal processing such as etching. In Figure 10, masking spacers 100 are formed on the exposed portions of the conductors 70 and insulator 80 using any sidewall spacer formation technique, such as those discussed above.
- [0033] In Figure 11, an etching process is used to remove portions of the silicon 14 and insulator 16. This processing forms the silicon 14 into fin structures, which can be seen more clearly in the top-view shown in Figure 14. Next, in Figure 12, an insulator 120 is grown on the exposed portions of the silicon 14. In Figure 13, the gate material 130 is deposited over the entire structure and subsequently patterned. Note that the floating gate 30 and the programming gate 70 are also patterned simultaneously with the logic gate 130. Figure 14 shows a top view of the structure shown along line I-I in Figure 13, with the gate conductor 130 patterned over the center portion of the silicon fin 14. The center portion of the silicon fin 142 comprises a channel region, while the ends 140 of the silicon fin 14 are doped to comprise source and drain regions.
- [0034] Figures 13 and 14 show the resulting structure which is a multiple-gate transistor that includes a channel region 142 and source and drain regions 140 at ends of the channel region 142. A gate oxide 120 is positioned between a logic gate 130 and the channel region 142 and a first insulator 20 is formed between a floating gate 30

and the channel region 142. The first insulator 20 is thicker than the gate oxide 120. The floating gate 30 is electrically insulated from other structures. Also, a second insulator 50 is positioned between the programming gate 70 and the floating gate 30. Voltage in the logic gate 130 causes the transistor to switch on and off, while charge in the floating gate 30 adjusts the threshold voltage of the transistor.

- [0035] As shown in Figure 14, the transistor can comprises a fin-type field effect transistor (FinFET), where the channel region 142 comprises the middle portion of a fin structure 14 and the source and drain regions 142 comprise end portions of the fin structure 14. Alternatively, the invention can comprise any type of transistor as shown in the schematic in Figure 15. The structure includes the logic gate 130, source and drain 140, channel region 142, the oxide 120, insulators 20 and 50, floating gate 30, and programming gate 70 that are discussed above. This type of transistor can comprise a planar field effect transistor, vertical field effect transistor, or any other similar type of transistor.
- [0036] As mentioned above, by changing the voltage of the programming gate 70, the voltage in the floating gate 30 is correspondingly changed, allowing the transfer of charge to or from the floating gate. In other words, carriers migrate from the drain 14 to the floating gate 30 through the insulator 20 that separates a portion of the drain 14 from the floating gate 30. Charge stored on the floating gate 30 creates field lines that cross the channel region 142, which changes the threshold voltage of the transistor itself. Therefore, by altering the charge of the floating gate 30, the threshold voltage of the transistor can be increased or decreased. This allows the floating gates to be programmed according to the need to provide a chip with higher performance and lower power consumption.
- [0037] As a result of this invention, circuits with smaller delay and lower leakage can be produced. Specifically, leakages of transistors, or groups of transistors, can be adjusted according to need after fabrication of a semiconductor device, for example,

to reduce leakage where there is more than adequate speed of some circuits, by increasing the threshold voltages of the selected, fast, devices. Similarly, if speed is determined to be lacking for some transistors, the threshold voltages of those transistors can be decreased to increase the drive strength of those transistors. The functionality of some some circuits is critically dependent on specific relationships, for instance, ratios of drive strengths of the FETs within an 6T SRAM Cell; these circuits can further derive the benefits of improved process yield by adjusting sets of FETs as needed to restore the required relationships of threshold voltages or drive strengths in circuits that would otherwise fail due to as-fabricated mismatches.

- [0038] While the invention has been described in terms of preferred embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention can be practiced with modification within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.